

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PEPR, GR, EG, US
SUBJECT: GREEK REACTION TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S MESSAGE TO SADAT

REF: (A) NICOSIA 526 (DTG 251215ZFEB78) (B) ATHENS 1640 (DTG
1553Z24FEB78)

1. DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO THE CYPRIOT-EGYPTIAN DISPUTE CONTINUED
TO BE FEATURED PROMINENTLY IN THE GREEK NEWS MEDIA OVER THE
WEEKEND AND IN TODAY'S (FEBRUARY 27) AFTERNOON NEWSPAPERS. THE
TEXT OF THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT SADAT WAS QUOTED
WIDELY IN THE PRESS WHICH HIGHLIGHTED THE REFERENCE TO SADAT'S
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"COURAGEOUS DECISION" AND THE OMISSION OF ANY REFERENCE TO WHAT
WAS SEEN HERE AS A VIOLATION OF CYPRIOT SOVEREIGNTY BY THE EGYPT-
IANS. MOST ACCOUNTS REFLECTED BITTERNESS OVER WHAT WAS VIEWED
AS ENDORSEMENT OF AN ILLEGAL ACT.

2. PRINCIPAL OPPOSITION LEADER PAPANDREOU ISSUED A STATEMENT
CRITICIZING THE PRESIDENT AND POINTED TO THE MESSAGE TO SADAT

AS FURTHER PROOF THAT GREECE'S MEMBERSHIP IN NATO AND ITS ALLIANCE WITH THE US, INCLUDING THE PRESENCE OF US BASES HERE, ARE NOT ONLY AGAINST GREEK INTERESTS BUT UNDERMINE THEM.

3. THE COMMUNIST NEWSPAPERS CONTINUED THEIR REFRAIN THAT EVENTS AT LARNACA WERE PART OF AN IMPERIALIST PLOT, WHEREAS ULTRA CONSERVATIVE ESTIA MADE AN UNFAVORABLE COMPARISON OF THE PRESIDENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE LARNACA INCIDENT WITH HIS STAND ON HUMAN RIGHTS. SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS POINTED TO THE CONFUSION ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE AND WHAT IT ACTUALLY MEANT, IN VIEW OF THE WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN'S COMMENT ABOUT THE MESSAGE THE PREVIOUS DAY (REF B). THEY ALSO CHARGED THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE MESSAGE WAS TO STRENGTHEN THE POSITION OF PRESIDENT SADAT WHICH HAD SUFFERED FROM THE LARNACA INCIDENT AND WAS BEING THREATENED, MORE GENERALLY, BY INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES IN EGYPT AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

4. ALL THE PRESS YESTERDAY REPORTED IN SOME DETAIL THAT THE CYPRIOT GOVERNMENT HAD SOUGHT CLARIFICATIONS FROM WASHINGTON ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE. THE AFTERNOON PRESS TODAY (FEBRUARY 27) FOCUSED ITS COVERAGE ON REPORTS THAT SECRETARY VANCE HAD GIVEN ASSURANCES TO PRESIDENT KYPRIANOU DURING A TELEPHONE CONVERSATION YESTERDAY. AS IN THE CASE OF NICOSIA (PARAGRAPH 4 OF REF A), THE LEFTIST PRESS CONTINUES TO PUSH THE CONSPIRACY THEORY ALLEGING US INVOLVEMENT IN THE LARNACA INCIDENT. (EVEN CONSERVATIVE AKROPOLIS, IN A STORY DATED NICOSIA, RAISED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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QUESTIONS ABOUT SADAT'S PURPOSE IN SENDING THE COMMANDOS TO LARNACA, IMPLYING SOME DARK PLOT). MOREOVER, THE IMPRECISION IN THE REPORTING CONCERNING PRESIDENT CARTER'S MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT SADAT AND ITS TREATMENT HERE, HAS CONTRIBUTED TO A FEELING SHARED BY MANY GREEKS THAT SOMETHING DETRIMENTAL TO CYPRUS IS AFOOT WHICH IS SOMEHOW CONNECTED TO A U.S. EFFORT TO LIFT THE TURKISH ARMS EMBARGO.
MILLS

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